

Problem of standardizing names which are not formally exonyms

The Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names deals among others with standardization of Polish geographical names of the world. However, Polish names for objects situated outside Poland and different from endonyms of these objects, called exonyms, are not the only names standardized by the Commission. In practice the Commission also standardizes as “Polish geographical names of the world” other names, which are not exonyms, but they are traditionally used in Poland. Because the Commission has never formally decided, which names, beside exonyms should be standardized, its activity so far is characterized by a certain inconsistency.

So “Polish geographical names of the world” comprise exonyms and other names, which have their functions, not being formally exonyms. These other names can be divided into three groups.

First group comprises geographical names of trans-border objects. In many cases the Commission adopted, as Polish, names which are formally endonyms – these are names identical with at least one standardized endonym applied in one of the countries, where an object is situated, but at the same time different from the remaining endonyms of this object (applied in the other countries comprising the same object). Mainly names of rivers, lakes and mountains belong to this type of names standardized by the Commission. For instance for Transcaucasian river the Commission adopted name *Kura*, i.e. name identical with official Turkish endonym (in Georgia this river is called *Mtqvari*, while in Azerbaijan *Kür*). Similarly, for the longest river in Central Europe the Commission adopted name *Dunaj*, being Slovakian endonym and transcription of Ukrainian name *Дунай* – *Dunaj*. Name *Dunaj* is treated as Polish name and applied for the whole river, i.e. outside Slovakia and Ukraine, also in Germany and Austria (German endonym: *Donau*), in Hungary (Hungarian endonym *Duna*), in Croatia and Serbia (Croatian and Serbian endonym *Dunav*), in Bulgaria (Bulgarian endonym *Дунав* – *Dunav*) and in Rumania (Rumanian endonym *Dunărea*). Much more similar names were adopted by the Commission, for instance *Araks* (Armenian name was adopted for river in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran), *Amur* (Russian name was adopted for river in China and Russia), *Chanka* (Russian name was adopted for lake in China and Russia), *Lhotse* (Nepalese name was adopted for mountain in Nepal and China), *Mweru* (English name was adopted for lake in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia).

Second group comprises names of objects situated in one country, but having two or more official endonyms, including those having official endonyms in two or more languages. In many cases the Commission adopted as a name applied in Poland one of these endonyms. Names of cities mainly belong to this type of names standardized by the Commission, but sometimes also names of natural objects. For example, for capital of Ireland name *Dublin* was adopted, i.e. English endonym, not recommending Irish endonym *Baile Átha Cliath*. Similarly, for capital of Finland only Finnish endonym *Helsinki* is recommended, not Swedish endonym *Helsingfors*, while for highland in Inner Mongolia in China only Mongolian endonym *Ordos* is recommended, not Chinese endonym *E'erdousi Gaoyuan*. For capital of Albania name *Tirana* was adopted, i.e. one of two Albanian endonyms (the second is *Tiranë*). The other similar, determined by the Commission names are among others: *Majuro*, *Manila*, *Pretoria*, *Stepanakert*, *Suchumi*, *Burundi*, *Nauru*, *Palau*.

Third group comprises names of objects, which are originally written in non-Roman alphabets. For some of these names two ways of romanization can be adopted: transcription or transliteration. In case of some names the Commission standardized, as names recommended for using in Poland, endonyms written in one of two possible methods of romanization. For instance, for mountains in Russia the Commission set a name *Ural*, i.e. Russian endonym *Урал* written in transliteration (in transcription this Russian name has form *Ural*), and for republic name *Dagestan* – Russian endonym *Дагестан* written in transliteration (in transcription it has form *Dagiestan*). For the other republic in Russia name *Altaj* was adopted, i.e. Russian endonym *Алта́й* in transcription (in transliteration it has form *Altaj*), and for country in Africa name *Džibuti*, i.e. Arab endonym *جيبوتي* in transcription (in transliteration recommended by the Commission it has form *Jībūtī*).

Despite standardizing numerous names in three above mentioned groups, still many similar toponyms were not standardized by the Commission, e.g. *La Manche / English Channel*, *Rio Bravo / Río Grande del Norte*, *Sonora / Sonoran*, *Kattegat / Kattegatt*, *Montreal / Montréal*, *Quebec / Québec*, *Bangalur / Bangalore*, *Lahaur / Lahore*, *Luzon / Luson*, *Bajkał / Bajkał*, *Kamczatka / Kamčatka*, *Elbrus / Èl'brus*, *Adźman / 'Ajmān*, *Ar-Rab al-Chali / Ar-Rab' al-Khālī*, *Terek / Tierrek*, etc. – from listed pairs of endonyms only names mentioned at first place are applied in Polish language.

These names, which are not exonyms, but in practice being “Polish geographical names of the world” can be called “quasi-exonyms”. Such a Polish “quasi-exonym” can be defined as a name currently used in Poland in Polish language for geographical feature situated outside territory of Poland, which has at least two standardized endonyms or, in case of endonym originally written in non-Latin alphabet, having at least two forms of notation, and not different in graphical form from one of endonyms or forms of its notation. As a form of notation of endonym originally written in non-Roman alphabet form consistent with rules of transcription and transliteration adopted by the Commission should be considered.

On the other hand “Polish geographical names of the world” comprising exonyms and quasi-exonyms can be defined as a name currently used in Poland in Polish language for geographical feature situated outside its territory and different in graphical form from at least one standardized endonym of this feature or, in case of endonym written in non-Roman alphabet, different from at least one form of its notation.

Geographical names applied in Poland, which differ from official endonym only with translation or omitting generic form, are the separate problem which requires analysis, for instance: *Zatoka Alaska – Gulf of Alaska* (English); *Wodospad Niagara – Niagara Falls* (English); *Morze Timor – Timor Sea* (English), *Laut Timor* (Indonesian); *Zatoka Fundy – Bay of Fundy* (English), *Baie de Fundy* (French); *Cieśnina Juan de Fuca – Juan de Fuca Strait* (English), *Détroit de Juan de Fuca* (French). The Commission standardized from this type of names only names of seas (e.g. *Morze Timor*, *Morze Halmahera*, *Morze Afafura*). The Commission did not decide so far, if these names should be treated as “Polish geographical names of the world” and whether it should standardize them.